

The Man in a Tree

Big Idea: Jesus is my God. His love changes me.

● **Memory Verse**
“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Word of the Week
“Change” - Change means to make something different. You can change clothes by putting on different clothes. Or you might make a different choice to play outside instead of inside—you could change your mind. Jesus can change our selfish, sinful hearts so we can be loving and kind, as He is.

This week’s lesson
 is based on **Luke 19:1-10** and *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 552-556.

Sunday

The Thief

Clink, clink. Zacchaeus slid two coins into the money box with a smile.

Zacchaeus was a “chief tax collector, and he was rich” (Luke 19:2). He had the job of collecting tax money from everyone in Jericho and giving it to the Roman rulers.

Shopkeepers, farmers, and fishermen all lined up in front of Zacchaeus’ table. Quietly they waited their turn to pay. But Zacchaeus was sneaky and dishonest. He sat at that table and lied and cheated.

What is commandment number eight of the Ten Commandments? Read **Exodus 20:15**.

Zacchaeus didn’t follow God’s way of love. This hurt God. Instead, he chose to steal. If a farmer needed to pay one silver coin, Zacchaeus made him pay two. Zacchaeus would drop one coin into the money box. Then, shh . . . when no one was watching, the other coin would disappear into his pocket—all for himself.

The people knew Zacchaeus was a thief. But they couldn’t stop him. They would walk away from his table sad and angry. Now their families would go without things they really needed.

When we take things that aren’t ours, we hurt the people we steal from. Jesus wants us to always be giving and loving instead. He can change us so that we want to be like that too! Jesus could even help greedy Zacchaeus.

I Wonder

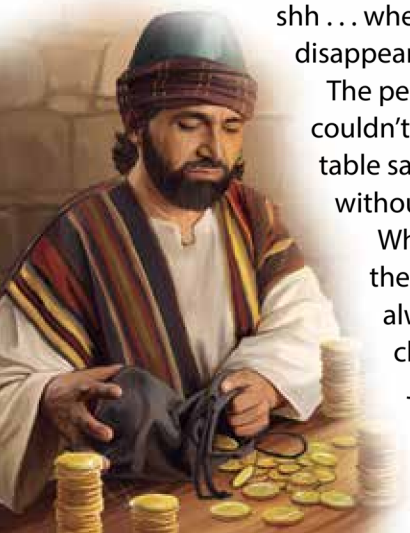
- » Why was it wrong for Zacchaeus to take extra coins for himself?
- » Who was hurt by his cheating and stealing?

Prayer Idea

Ask Jesus to help you respect others and be honest.

Do

Our memory verse says, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation” (2 Corinthians 5:17). What can you find outside that is brand-new? Can you find a flower that’s just opened up, a new green shoot, new snow, or a new ants’ nest? Our Creator loves to make things new—even inside our hearts!



Monday

Big News in Jericho

Zacchaeus sat at his tax table in busy Jericho and listened. He didn't listen to the clink, clink of coins. He listened very closely to the buzzing crowds. It seemed everyone in Jericho was talking about Jesus.

Some told stories of His kindness. Others spoke of His wise words. Then there were the amazing stories about His mighty miracles. The more Zacchaeus heard, the more he wanted to meet Jesus.

Zacchaeus wasn't very popular. Tax collectors were not well liked, even when they were honest. But Zacchaeus wasn't honest. He was a cheat and a thief. Would Jesus want to meet him? Read **Luke 15:2**.

One day, as Zacchaeus sat at his table counting coins, he heard a shout. And then another. *Jesus! Jesus was coming!*

Mothers left their cooking. Fathers dropped their tools. Children stopped playing. Together they all raced down the road. "Jesus was going through the city of Jericho" (Luke 19:1, ICB).

When Zacchaeus heard the exciting news, his heart leaped with joy. Jesus, the one he had heard so much about, was right here in Jericho! He knew what he must do. He must meet Jesus!

I Wonder

- » Whom might you tell about kind, wise, mighty Jesus?
- » How does Jesus treat people who sin, such as Zacchaeus? Why do you think that is?
- » Did you know that Matthew, Jesus' disciple friend, was a tax collector?

Prayer Idea

Ask God to make your heart more like His.

Do

Find two magnets and test how strongly they pull together. Jesus is like a magnet, always drawing people to His love—no matter what mistakes they've made.

Memory Verse



Tuesday

Trying to See Jesus

Without a second thought, Zacchaeus scrambled to his feet and ran down the road. He didn't stop to think about his money table. Zacchaeus had only one thought—he must see Jesus.

The big crowd up ahead pushed, shoved, and bumped each other. They squeezed in close, trying to get a glimpse of Jesus as He walked down the road.

Oh, no. Zacchaeus stopped and looked at the crowd. He had a big “little” problem. What was it? Read **Luke 19:3**.

Standing on tiptoe, Zacchaeus tried to peer over the tall shoulders. Holding in his breath, he tried to squeeze between gaps, but it was no use. The big strong wall of people stopped Zacchaeus from getting any closer to Jesus.

Zacchaeus couldn't see Jesus, but God knew He was there and cared for him. The Bible says, “The Lord looks down from heaven. He sees every person” (Psalm 33:13, ICB). Even though Zacchaeus was small and had made so many bad choices, God loved him.

I Wonder

- » Share a time when you were too short to see something. How did it make you feel?
- » What would you have done if you had been Zacchaeus?

Prayer Idea

Thank God that He loves us and wants to change us.

Do

Write your memory verse on little notes (with help if needed) and decorate. Leave them with your neighbors (under doors/near mailboxes).

Memory Verse





Wednesday

The Sycamore Tree

The people in the crowd were very tall, but Zacchaeus was very short. His shoulders slumped. It was no use—he could never get past this crowd to see Jesus.

Then a brilliant idea popped into his head. A tree! Yes, he could climb a tree. Then he would be high enough to see over the crowd.

Zacchaeus “ran ahead to a place where he knew Jesus would come” (Luke 19:4. ICB). He grinned as he spotted a large shady sycamore tree on the side of the road. Its branches stretched out over the path. *Yes! That would be perfect.*

What did he do next? Read **Luke 19:4**.

Gripping the low branches with his hands and pressing his feet against the rough tree trunk, Zacchaeus scrambled up, up, up. Then carefully he shuffled out onto a thick branch and waited. His legs dangled, and his eyes peered down the road.

Jesus and the crowd came closer and closer. Soon the people were right underneath the tree. Zacchaeus’ heart pounded. Jesus was right below him! Then something surprising happened. Jesus stopped. Everyone stopped.

Jesus “looked up and saw him.” Jesus’ eyes sparkled with love and care. “Zacchaeus,” Jesus said (Luke 19:5).

Zacchaeus could barely believe what he was hearing. Jesus knew his name! Jesus cared about him!

Parent Faith Talk

Share with your child something that you have done for Jesus that other people might have thought was silly or crazy.

I Wonder

- » Why did Jesus stop and look up?
- » Does Jesus know your name, too? How does this make you feel?

Prayer Idea

Thank Jesus that He knows your name and loves you.

Do

Climb a small tree with the help of a parent. While you are sitting high, imagine Jesus looking up at Zacchaeus. Practice saying your memory verse.

Mission Challenge

Pray each day for the new friends God has given you. Pray that they will make Jesus their very best friend.

Memory Verse

Thursday

Making Things Right

"Zacchaeus, . . . come down, for today I must stay at your house," Jesus said, smiling up into the tree (Luke 19:5).

Zacchaeus looked down. *Was he dreaming? Was Jesus really talking to him?*

It seemed so hard to believe.

Coming down from the tree, Zacchaeus gazed into the loving face of Jesus. He didn't quite know what to say. He didn't deserve this kindness from Jesus.

Jesus knew his name! Jesus loved and cared for him and wanted to visit his house!

The love and forgiveness of Jesus was changing the old lying Zacchaeus. What can Jesus change us into? Read **2 Corinthians 5:17**.

That's just what Zacchaeus was now! Looking up at Jesus, he said, "I will give half of my money to the poor. If I have cheated anyone, I will pay that person back four times more!" (Luke 19:8, ICB).

Right away, immediately, this new, loving Zacchaeus began to make things right. He didn't want to just give back the money he had taken. He wanted to give the poor people much more money than what he had stolen from them, to say he was sorry for hurting them.

When we let Jesus change us, we will want to make our wrongs right too. We will want to be as loving and generous as He.

I Wonder

- » Can you think of a time you did something wrong? How did you make it right?
- » Is there anything you would like to ask God to forgive you for?

Prayer Idea

Ask Jesus to help you make any wrongs right with others.

Do

Find six items of the same thing: bottle tops, pencils, toys. Make two piles: a pile for a worker, with two items; a pile for Zacchaeus, with four items. Pretend Zacchaeus took one item. How many would the worker have left? When Jesus changed Zacchaeus, he didn't just give back the one item. He gave back four! How many items would the worker have now?

Memory Verse





Friday

New Zacchaeus

The crowd at the bottom of the sycamore tree grumbled and frowned. *Jesus was talking to cheating, lying Zacchaeus! Worse still, Jesus wanted to go stay at his house!*

The people of Jericho complained out loud. What did they say? Read **Luke 19:7**.

They didn't realize that Jesus loved him anyway. And the love of Jesus had already changed Zacchaeus. He had decided to give away so much money. The tax collector from Jericho wanted to be just like Jesus and show kindness and honesty too.

Jesus looked from loving Zacchaeus to the frowning crowd. With a big smile He said, "he also is a son of Abraham" (Luke 19:9).

Zacchaeus was now a new creation. He belonged to Jesus' big family. No longer a lying, stealing tax collector, Zacchaeus was a child of God. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17). What a wonderful miracle!

Then Jesus told everyone that this kind of miracle—the miracle of changing people's hearts—was what He had come to do. "The Son of Man came to find lost people and save them" (Luke 19:10, ICB).

I Wonder

- » What might Jesus and Zacchaeus have talked about over lunch at Zacchaeus' house?
- » Who showed more love, the crowd or Zacchaeus? Why?
- » If you had been in the crowd, what would you have said to Jesus? to Zacchaeus?

Prayer Idea

Thank Jesus that He has come to change and save us.

Memory Verse

Family Activity

Memory Box

Look around the house for something that is dirty. Clean it and put it in your memory box as a reminder of Zacchaeus and how Jesus' love changes our hearts.

For You, Parents

"Men hate the sinner, while they love the sin. Christ hates the sin, but loves the sinner. This will be the spirit of all who follow Him" (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 462).

A Froggy Miracle

A blob of little slimy balls floating in a creek may not look very exciting. But that little blob is far from ordinary, it is the beginning of an amazing miracle. This blob contains hundreds of tiny, slippery eggs. And these eggs will change into frogs!

These little eggs within the blob are called frogspawn. They have a tiny black dot and look a bit like an eyeball! This frogspawn will miraculously change into something that looks, sounds, and acts completely different.

Over time the little dot gets bigger and bigger. It grows a tail. Then after a few weeks, out it pops! The frogspawn is now a tadpole. But it looks more like a fish than a frog. It has a long tail and gills, so it can breathe underwater.

The tadpole wriggles and swims in the water, nibbling on plants. During the next few weeks something else begins to grow—its back legs! Then it grows front legs too. But it is not finished changing yet!

After the tadpole grows legs, its tail begins to shrink away. It grows lungs for breathing and eardrums to hear better.

Then when its amazing change is complete, it hops up and out of the water as a frog. It can now breathe air, jump high, and use its long sticky tongue to catch a quick meal. What an amazing change!

When Jesus lives in your heart, He changes you. Every day He is making you more and more beautiful inside. His love helps you to think differently, speak differently, and act differently than your old self.

The Bible says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17). What an amazing miracle!

Frog Jokes

How does a frog feel when it has a broken leg?

Unhobby.

What did the frog say at the library?

Reddit. Reddit. Reddit.

